

## HAMNET BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2003

HAMNET is the Official Emergency Communications network of the South African Radio League and provides emergency communication to local, regional and national authorities, when requested to do so.

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IN THE BULLETIN TODAY:-

BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY RAYNET CELEBRATES 50 YEARS LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL DISASTERS POWER FAILURE EXERCISE SEARCH & RESCUE CONFERENCE

### 1. HAMNET BULLETINS AROUND THE COUNTRY

KZN Sunday morning at 07H00 on their local VHF repeaters with a relay on 7.070MHz

National Bulletin at 17H00 local on 145,700MHz, 10,130Mhz in the 30M band with a relay on 7.070Mhz in the 40M band.

The Gauteng North bulletin will follow immediately after the National Bulletin on 145,725MHz in the Pretoria area on Sundays.

North West Province have a club bulletin on Mondays, which includes a Hamnet segment at 19H00 local on 3,750Mhz in the 80M band as well as their local repeater on 145.737.5Mhz.

Hamnet Western Cape Province with a bulletin on Wednesdays at 20H30 local on 145:700MHz, relayed on 3,674MHz.

The HAMNET Bulletin is sent to all those of whom I have an e-mail address and also sent out on packet by Rudi, ZS6DX.

### 2. RAYNET CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

In response to an e-mail I received from Paul Gaskell, G4MWO three weeks ago, I felt it appropriate to send them a congratulatory e-mail on the occasion of RAYNET celebrating 50 years of voluntary service to their communities in and around the U.K.

Paul indicated that all congratulatory letters, telegrams and e-mails will be read at the their 50th Annual Conference that took place on Saturday the 25th of October.

RAYNET initially started under the name of RAEN Radio Amateur Emergency Network with the motto "be prepared and keep prepared for an emergency".

Paul acknowledged our e-mail and indicated that he would respond with a longer letter in due course.

Well-done RAYNET. I am trying to establish the actual formation date of HAM-NET and some information will be forthcoming in due course so we can also plan for an anniversary year with a special call sign for the occasion. It looks like it could be 20 December 2004. We will be 30 years old.

### 3. LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL DISASTERS

California fires.

Many of you probably saw some TV inserts in news bulletins on the disaster that beset California. The devastation as quoted from the ARRL website is "Absolutely Unbelievable".

The fires are being wind-driven and continue to burn out of control in many counties, which have already been declared disaster areas.

ARES and RACES teams have been activated to assist local authorities and relief organizations. As many as 100 amateurs are participating, many of them supporting the efforts of relief agencies such as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

The majority of communication was taking place on VHF.

Smoke from the fires are causing problems not only with aircraft but also making life difficult for residents on the ground.

China Earthquake.

Two earthquakes measuring 6.1 and 5.8 on the Richter Scale hit Northwest Gansu Province on Saturday evening the 25th of October.

The quake killed 9 and injured 43 people, of whom at least 6 are in a serious condition.

The Ministry of Civil Affairs has confirmed that more than 137,000 people in 22 towns are affected by these quakes.

Tents and emergency food supplies are being airlifted and brought in by road to the affected areas.

In the Silk Road Zhangye province, sluice gates were opened at one reservoir to avert the possibility of pressure on the wall, giving way and causing severe flood damage lower down the river.

The Democratic Republic of Congo.

On Thursday 9th of October, severe thunderstorms occurred in and around the town of Bikoro in the Equator Province. A school with at least 200 students was struck by lightning causing the death of at least 11 students and 73 injuries of whom 25 were either severely burned or in a state of shock.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Red Cross were deployed to render assistance to the children.

Vietnam flooding.

Vietnam was hit by torrential rain earlier this month (October) that caused many rivers to rise and flood surrounding areas.

Although we have no figures on deaths and people left homeless, the report indicates that in some provinces, severe flooding occurred which not only damaged the transport system but also destroyed thousands of hectares of agricultural lands.

They have an alarm system built into their river system that indicates the danger level of any river at any time. Alarm 1 = Possible flooding. Alarm 2 = Dangerous flood conditions. Alarm 3 = Very dangerous flood conditions and Alarm 4 = emergency flood conditions.

Mexico.

During September and October, Mexico was hit by 3 severe hurricanes named Larry, Olaf and Nera.

While no single event has been of catastrophic dimensions, the combined effect has resulted in the worst flooding in many years over a wide swath of Mexico's states.

As many as 14 states have been declared disaster areas with severe damage to roads, crops and homes. In Jalisco city alone, 12,000 homes were damaged by flood waters.

Basic requirements for relief efforts include items like blankets, mattresses, kitchen utensils and cleaning materials.

The Complex emergency list is as long as my arm, starting in alphabetical order in Afghanistan right down to West Africa and includes as many as 25 countries.

#### 4. POWER FAILURE EXERCISE

Subsequent to the Bulletin of last month, where we discussed the incidence of massive power failures in countries around the world, it was suggested that we have a Bulletin or informal meeting one Sunday, running alternative power only.

This is a good idea as it also enables us to ensure the availability of alternative power when required. I will not make it this Sunday, but will advise you when this will happen.

The other phenomena that caught the imagination of many amateurs around the country and the world this last week, was the massive Solar Flares which wreaked havoc in worldwide communication.

It all started on the 23rd of October with a Solar Flare from approx. 8:10 am to about 9:00am. Many operators commented on the disappearance of signals on 40 metres. On checking the other bands, the only stations audible were the many kilowatt commercial stations like the BBC that could just be heard.

By Tuesday the 28th more flairs had aggravated communication problems with the one on the 28th being the 2nd largest during cycle 23. It recorded a sun spot count of 257 and an A index of 15.

The geometric effect hit earth on the 29th and I wonder if anybody on the southern coastal areas could observe the southern lights or Aurora Australis effect if any.

All this was eclipsed by yet another flare on the 30th that pushed the sun spot count just short of 300 and the A index to its highest possible level of 400 the highest flare recorded in cycle 23.

It did bring some benefit. The 10-meter band was wide open and assisted many operators who participated in the CQ Worldwide phone contest on Sunday.

It is obvious that should there have been an emergency communication situation on the go during this event, it could have affected us as well.

#### 5. SEARCH & RESCUE CONFERENCE

Many HAMNET members will be travelling down to KZN next week to attend the 1st Biennial Search & Rescue conference scheduled for the 12th and 13th of November at the Kapenta Bay Conference Centre in Port Shepstone.

Of interest on the Agenda is the launch of the Search & Rescue Website that was discussed at the Convention held in Somerset West in September last year.

We will be viewing this Website with interest and will approach the powers that be to possibly list HAMNET as an alternative emergency communications network in times of distress.

We will keep you informed as to how the conference went.

Bulletin ends.